

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 NAIROBI 2780/1

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: WMO
SUBJ: WMO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION (RA-I) FOR AFRICA: SEVENTH SESSION

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1. SUMMARY: SEVENTH SESSION OF THE WMO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AFRICA CLOSED FEBRUARY 17 WITH ALL AGENDA ITEMS COMPLETED. TOTAL ATTENDANCE WAS 37 OF THE FULL MEMBERSHIP OF 49. SESSION DEALT WITH THORNY QUESTION OF FINDING REPLACEMENT FOR REGIONAL METEOROLOGICAL AND TELECOMMUNICATION CENTER PRETORIA; STRENGTHENED THE SYSTEM FOR COLLECTION OF WEATHER INFORMATION OVER AFRICA; INSISTED ON LOCATING WMO REGIONAL OFFICE IN AFRICA; INSISTED ON LOCATING WMO REGIONAL OFFICE IN AFRICA; URGED ALL MEMBERS TO ENSURE RECEPTION OF NEW EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY METEOSAT AND NEW U.S. POLAR ORBITING SATELLITE TIROS-N. IT RE-ELECTED THE PRESENT OFFICERS FOR ANOTHER FOUR YEARS.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WMO REGIONAL OFFICE IN AFRICA WAS VIGOROUSLY PRESSED AND CORRIDOR ARGUMENTS FOR DELAY HAD NO SUPPORT. ARRANGEMENTS FOR AND COSTS OF THE AFRICAN OFFICE WERE TO BE STUDIED BY THE SECGEN WMO, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE WMO
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CONGRESS IN RECOGNITION THAT THE OFFICE WOULD BE EXPENSIVE AND BEYOND THE MEANS OF THE AFRICAN MEMBERS TO SUPPORT ALONE. IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER WMO REGIONS COULD BE IMPORTANT. NO DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE ON PROBABLE SITE AND UGANDA OFFERED TO HOST THE OFFICE, AND CAMEROON SAID THEY WERE CONSIDERING A SIMILAR OFFER. THESE WERE SIMPLY NOTED.

3. AFTER LONG DEBATE, WITH ALGIERS, EGYPT AND NIGERIA LEADING THE OPPOSITION, THE SESSION FINALLY REACHED A COMPROMISE TO REPLACE FUNCTIONS NOW PERFORMED BY REGIONAL METEOROLOGICAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS CENTER, PRETORIA BY CENTERS TO BE SET UP IN LUSAKA, BRAZZAVILLE, LAGOS AND TANNANARIVE. LUSAKA WILL MAINTAIN THE LINK WITH PRETORIA FOR TWO-WAY EXCHANGE OF WEATHER DATA, AS SOUTH AFRICA IS VITAL SOURCE OF WEATHER REPORTS FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA AND SURROUNDING SEA AREAS AS, WELL AS THE PREPARATION OF HIGH QUALITY ANALYSES AND PREDICTIONS. STUBBORN OPPOSITION OF EGYPT AND ALGIERS, NEITHER OF WHOM USE PRETORIA DATA, WAS NOT APPRECIATED BY COUNTRIES IN SOUTHERN PART OF THE REGION. ACTION PROPOSED WILL BE COSTLY FOR COUNTRIES CONCERNED AND ASSISTANCE WILL BE NECESSARY. TARGET DATES OF 1979 AND 1980 TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE MET WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL HELP FROM COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE REGION.

4. THE ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZED THE SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES THAT COUNTINUE TO EXIST IN THE BASIC SYSTEM OF OBSERVATIONS. WHILE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS ARE BEING MADE, THESE ARE DUE MAINLY TO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE, WITH THE U.S.A. AND FRANCE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS. EFFORTS TO BRING THE NETWORKS UP TO RECOMMENDED STANDARDS IN TIME FOR THE WMO GLOBAL WEATHER EXPERIMENT IN 1979 ARE BEING ACCELERATED. BECAUSE OF OVERWHELMING DIFFICULTIES, THE PROPOSED NETWORK OF FIXED OCEAN STATIONS IN SEA AREAS SURROUNDING AFRICA HAVE BEEN DROPPED FOR THE TIME BEING FROM THE NETWORK PLANS. THE NEED TO RECRUIT MANY MORE MERCHANT VESSELS AS UNCLASSIFIED

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VOLUNTARY OBSERVING SHIPS WAS STRESSED. IN SPITE OF LARGE NUMBER OF SHIPS FLYING FLAGS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES, ONLY 57 SUCH SHIPS ARE NOW TAKING PART IN THIS IMPORTANT PROGRAM.

5. AS REPORTED IN REFERENCE TELEGRAM, LAUNCH OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY (ESA) METEOSAT WAS THE HIGH POINT OF THE SESSION. THE ASSOCIATION URGED THAT ASSISTANCE BE GIVEN SO THAT ALL MEMBERS COULD RECEIVE THE TRANSMISSIONS FROM THIS GEOSTATIONARY METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THERE WILL BE PRESSURE ON OUTSIDE DONORS OF PRESENT GROUND RECEIVING STATIONS TO UP-GRADE THESE STATIONS SO THEY CAN RECEIVE THE METEOSAT TRANSMISSIONS. IT IS OBVIOUSLY DESIRABLE THAT THIS BE DONE, AS THE COSTS ARE COMPARATIVELY SMALL IN RELATION TO THE COSTS OF PUTTING THE SATELLITE INTO ORBIT. A RECOMMENDATION WAS ADOPTED URGING THAT ESA UNDERTAKE TO MAINTAIN AN OPERATIONAL SATELLITE OVER AFRICA FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS, SO AS TO JUSTIFY COSTS OF CONVERTING GROUND STATIONS FOR RECEPTION OF PRESENT SATELLITE. THE SATELLITE SYSTEM WAS VIEWED NOT ONLY

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AS A MAJOR THE ENTIRE CONTINENT, BUT
ALSO AS A MEANS FOR TRASMISSION OF WEATHER ANALYSES FROM
MAJOR WEATHER CENTERS OUTSIDE AFRICA, AND FOR COLLECTION OF
OBSERVATIONS FROM REMOTELY PLACED AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATIONS.

6. IN ADDITION TO TASK OF FINDING REPLACEMENT FOR
PRETORIA, THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOAD OF ALL CENTERS WAS
MORE EVENLY DISTRIBUTED BY SOME RE-GROUPING OF NATIONAL
CENTERS. ALGERIA REPORTED SHIFT OF ITS REGIONAL CENTER
FROM ALGERIA TO ORAN AND DECLARED THAT THEIR HIGH SPEED LINK
TO PARIS (2400 WORDS PER MINUTE) WAS THE ONLY PRESENT "WIDOW
TO EUROPE". POOR MAINTENANCE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT AND STAFF
PREVENT EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF WEATHER DATA WITHIN AND TO
OTHER WMO REGIONS. THE ITU REPORTED THE PANAFTELS SYSTEM, A
MODERN PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS NET WORK FOR AFRICA BEING SET UP
UNDER A CONSORTIUM HEADED BY THE WORLD BANK AND THE IBRD.
MET SOURCES WERE URGED TO INVESTIGATE ITS POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVED
WEATHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

7. THE APPLICATION OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE INFORMATION
WAS DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO AVIATION NEEDS, EXPLOITATION OF
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SOLAR AND WIND ENERGY. THE MAIN STRESS WAS, HOWEVER, PLACED
IN THE APPLICATIONS TO AGRICULTURE. THE DISCUSSIONS WERE
HIGHLIGHTED BY AN EXCELLENT LECTURE BY DR. A.R. SIDKY, FORMER

DEPUTY DIRECTOR FAO AND NOW A CONSULTANT TO WMO. A LENGTHY RESOLUTION WAS ADAPTED URGING AMONG OTHER THINGS A NUMBER OF STEPS FOR IMPROVING COLLABORATION BETWEEN AGRICULTURAL MINISTRIES AND WEATHER SERVICES, EVEN INCLUDING USE OF THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE WMO SECRETARY GENERAL AS AN INTERMEDIARY. CLOSER COOPERATION WITH FAO WAS ALSO STRESSED.

8. AS A COMPLEMENT TO THEIR EFFORTS, MEMBERS WERE ADVISED TO STRENGTHEN THEIR BONDS WITH HYDROLOGIC SERVICES. A ROVING SEMINAR ON HYDROLOGICAL DATA SYSTEMS SERVICING WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT WAS GIVEN PRIORITY.

9. WHILE RECOGNIZING THEIR LIMITATIONS, THERE WAS WIDE SUPPORT FOR THE WMO'S GLOBAL WEATHER EXPERIMENT. NINETY MEMBERS WILL TAKE PART IN THE WEST AFRICAN MONSOON EXPERIMENT (WAMEX), A SUB-PROGRAM OF THE GLOBAL EXPERIMENT. THE ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDED THAT THE SECOND SPECIAL OBSERVING PERIOD OF WAMEX BE EXTENDED THROUGH AUGUST 1979 TO COVER THE MOST ACTIVE PHASE OF THE AFRICAN MONSOON. THIS PROPOSAL WILL LIKELY RESULT IN REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT TO MAKE THESE ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

10. WITH OBVIOUS ENTHUSIASM THE ASSOCIATION RE-ELECTED THE PRESENT PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ABAYOMI, NIGERIA AND MBELLE-MBONG, CAMEROONE) FOR A FURTHER FOUR YEARS. IN A CAMERA MEETING FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS, IT WAS AGREED THAT MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION WOULD SUPPORT THE ELECTION OF J.K. MURITHI (KENYA) TO FILL THE SEAT ON THE WMO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LEFT VACANT BY THE RESIGNATION OF PADAYA OF MARITIUS.

11. OVERALL, THERE WAS AN OPTIMISTIC AND DYNAMIC TONE
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TO ALL THE DISCUSSIONS AT THIS SESSION. SIGNIFICANT GAINS HAVE BEEN MADE IN IMPROVING THE DATA BASE FROM WHICH WEATHER PREDICTIONS AND RESEARCH CAN BE CARRIED OUT IN AFRICA. MUCH OF THIS PROGRAMS HAS HOWEVER, RESULTED FROM OUTSIDE SUPPORT, UNLESS THIS IS CONTINUED FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT PROGRESS WILL CONTINUE. NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS DO NOT SEEM READY AT THIS STATE TO GIVE THEIR WEATHER SERVICES THE NEEDED SUPPORT. CONSEQUENTLY THE REPORT OF THIS SESSION IS FILLED WITH REQUESTS TO WMO AND OTHER MEMEBERS FOR ASSISTANCE OF ALL KINDS.IT IS CERTAIN THAT THERE WILL BE HEAVY PRESSURE AT THE NEXT WMO CONGRESS (APRIL/MAY 1979) FROM AFRICAN MEMBERS TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, BOTH IN THE REGULAR BUDGET OF THE WMO AND IN OTHER WAYS.
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